

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE GOSPEL

(Part Four)

TEXT: Philippians 2:4-11, 16, 19-24

INTRODUCTION: In chapter one of Paul's letter to the Philippians, we learned that the "fellowship of the gospel" entailed **suffering** and **sacrifice**. Paul thanked the Lord every time he thought about these believers because they were not ashamed of his imprisonment and were willing to pay whatever price was necessary that the gospel might be furthered. In chapter two, the apostle extols the virtue of **servanthood**. He cites three notable examples of selfless service to advance the gospel: 1) Christ Himself, 2) Timothy, and, 3) Epaphroditus.

Unlike other religious ideologies, the gospel of Jesus Christ spreads by love, not force. We must be willing love-slaves of Christ, not counting our lives dear unto ourselves, if we would see the gospel triumph in the lives of others.

OUTLINE: What can we learn from Christ, Timothy, and Epaphroditus about true **servanthood** that advances the gospel?

I. In Christ – Humility and Unselfishness

(vv. 5-11)

A. Christ's humility in His **incarnation** ("was made in the likeness of men")

B. Christ's humiliation in His **life** ("and being found in fashion as a man...")

C. Christ's obedience unto **death** (v. 8b)

II. In Timothy – Dedicated Servanthood

(vv. 19-24)

A. A **kindred spirit** with Paul ("For I have no man likeminded...")

B. **Dutiful service** with Paul (v. 22)

III. In Epaphroditus – Sacrificial Service

(vv. 25-30)

A. A true **brother**

B. A **fellow-laborer**

C. A **fellow-soldier**

D. The Philippians' **messenger** and **minister**

CONCLUSION: To be true slaves of Jesus Christ will cost us something. It may well cost us everything! We must surrender all our **rights** to the One Who died for our **wrongs**. If we are not called ourselves by God to be full-time gospel workers, we are called to addict ourselves to serving those who are.

Are we voluntarily humbling ourselves without stint and without complaining, like Jesus? Have we given up our own agenda – like Timothy – to serve God’s servants? Are we risk-takers like Epaphroditus? Those who refuse to do so and “play it safe” will lose their lives, Jesus said (Mk. 8:35).